

DON'T GET DISTRACTED BY

DAZZLE

BY KATE ZABRISKIE



Many businesses talk about giving exceptional service when they've yet to master the fundamentals of a reliable and repeatable experience. They look for opportunities to dazzle when they should first focus on the basics and work toward mastering consistently good.



Too many organizations mistakenly focus on the occasionally amazing instead of the consistently

good. Subsequently, reputations suffer, customers are less loyal, and employees are less capable of delivering on what's promised.

Is that to say that exceptional shouldn't be a goal? Of course not. It's just hard to run before you can walk, and most places occasionally stumble or have difficulty putting one foot in front of the other. Repeatable and reliable good service, both internally and externally, pays off more often than not for most organizations.

PAYOFF ONE

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" CAN BUILD TRUST.

When a person, division, or government delivers a solid service experience with few surprises, people know what to expect, and a certain level of trust develops. On the other hand, when a provider delivers an A today, a C tomorrow, and a D next week, the lack of consistency undermines the trust-building process. In short, A, C, D almost always loses to B, B, B.

YOUR MOVE:

Take a hard look at what you're delivering. Are you steady and consistent, or is there more variation in the service experience? If you're not performing with regularity, take the time to set basic standards, train on those expectations, and review and refine what you're doing on an ongoing basis.

PAYOFF TWO

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" CAN GROW LOYALTY.

Reliability leads to loyalty. When customers know what to expect, they're more likely to trust you if you haven't had them on a service roller coaster. If you're great only some of the time and occasionally missing good, you have something to work on.

YOUR MOVE:

Pay attention to what's working. For example, is an excellent employee staying with you because your workplace provides a good environment, or is it because nobody else has tried to lure them away yet? If it's the latter, it's time to focus on the fundamentals.

PAYOFF THREE

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" CAN REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

Organizations that deliver "exceptional" one day and "good" the next may find that their "good" fails to live up to the expectations that "exceptional" sets. Delivering a consistently good experience makes an organization less likely to run the risk of increasing expectations to the point where they can't be met. Those who chase "exceptional" without making sure every level of service is working find that they can't keep topping themselves.

YOUR MOVE:

Ask yourself if any previous efforts to delight have inadvertently encouraged your customers to expect more than you can consistently deliver. If that's happened, it's time to reset expectations. For example, if your normal service response time is 48 hours and you've gotten into the habit of jumping on command for certain customers, it may be time to go back to a more manageable schedule.




PAYOFF FOUR

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" IS EASIER TO TRAIN.

Showing employees how to deliver "exceptional" is much harder than teaching them how to consistently deliver a solid performance. By zeroing in on the fundamentals, businesses can streamline processes, reduce complexity, and show their employees how to regularly and reliably deliver something good.

YOUR MOVE:

Take a look at your training and what's happening on the job. Are you nailing the basics? If not, it's probably time to focus on the core activities that move the needle for most customers.



MOST ORGANIZATIONS WOULD SEE A GREATER RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT IF THEY STRIVED FOR A GRADE OF "CONSISTENTLY GOOD" INSTEAD OF THE OCCASIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO DELIGHT AND EXCITE.

PAYOFF FIVE

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" CAN BE MORE COST EFFECTIVE.

Before investing in shazam, bling, and wow, ask yourself if those efforts have an appropriate payoff. Offering something different might not be worth it.

YOUR MOVE:


Pay attention to where you're investing and what kind of payoff you're getting for your efforts. If customers don't value what you're providing, it may be time to modify your offerings.

PAYOFF SIX

"CONSISTENTLY GOOD" IS EASY TO MONITOR.

Whether a service experience meets standards is relatively easy to determine. In contrast, ascertaining delight is much harder and usually more subjective.

YOUR MOVE:

Focus on what you're evaluating and how. Are the standards measurable? If not, it may be time to rethink what you monitor and how you communicate that to the people providing service. Most organizations would see a greater return on their investment if they strived for a grade of "consistently good" instead of the occasional opportunity to delight and excite. The work is easier, and the payoff is better in the long run. 

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